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Date: 21 May 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Documents Branch, Intelligence Information Staff, ORR
THROUGH: Chief, Industrial Division, ORR
THROUGH: Chief, Manufacturing Sectors Branch, D/I
FROM: [REDACTED] I/MS 25X1A9a
SUBJECT: Translation of Chinese-language materials produced by the American Consulate-General, Hong Kong; comments on service pertaining to.

1. There is a continuing and urgent need for subject translations. They constitute some of our most valuable and frequently used source materials. Accurate and timely information provided by this service has, in the past, made a most important contribution to economic research on Communist China. By the same token, any deterioration in the quality of this material or serious delays in its receipt jeopardizes the accuracy and timeliness of our research efforts. It hardly needs to be added that other US government agencies, as well as private scholars at home and abroad, have come to depend on this service.

2. Serious deficiencies in the effectiveness of this vital service have become apparent in recent months. These may be conveniently divided into those which originate at the source (Hong Kong) and those which arise in Washington.

3. Of the former, it must unfortunately be reported that there has been a considerable deterioration in the quality of editing of the processed copy. We do not have in mind mere trivial mistakes in spelling, although there has been some increase in this. Rather, we cite an increasing appearance of distortions in the sense of the material. Words are selected which obviously do not agree with the context, and the meanings of some sentences are incomplete. It would seem that more attention should be given to careful editing of the rough copy prepared by the translators.

4. It is understood that stencils for subject publications are cut in Hong Kong, and, after some 200 copies are run off for local use, the stencils are flown to Washington. Reasonably rapid service is maintained up to this point, but then breaks down because of backlog in processing. As a result, delays of up to three months are incurred before the finished product reaches CIA analysts. This criticism is stated with certain reservation, as there is some evidence to suggest an attempt to work off this backlog. Some copies reaching this office have had missing pages.

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5. It is suggested that action addresses make representations looking toward vigorous action to correct deficiencies described in paragraph 3 and to investigate and report on measures being taken to improve the situation outlined in paragraph 4.

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